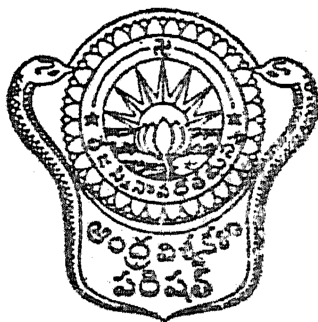
THE VOICE OF DHURJATI

An English Translation of
Srikalahastiswara Satakam of the Great
16th Century Telugu Poet Dhurjati

By

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FOREWORD

A 'Sataka' is a literary genre comprising a century of verses on a single or a connected theme. While there are famous Satakas in Sanskrit, Bhartrihari's for example, the Satakas in Telugu are said to number about one thousand. Perhaps the native music of Telugu speech seems to have contributed not a little to the success of the genre in the language. Essentially didactic or lyrical, the century of verses could between them cover a wide range of thought, or the entire gamut of human emotions, and yet orchestrate the several notes into a poem. What marks the Sataka is the refrain in each stanza, and this refrain serves as connecting link, pause in the sweep of thought, and beat in the swing of the rhythm. And the best Satakas are able to reconcile variety with unity, and richness of detail with harmony of effect.

'Sri Kalahastiswara Sataka' is among the most inspired, most mellifluous and most popular of the Telugu Satakas, and was the work of Dhurjati, one of the gems of Krishna Devaraya's Court in the 16th century. By tradition, the Lord of Kalahasti, Shiva, had been worshipped in long past times by a spider, a cobra and an elephant. Through their very devotion to the Lord, there erupted rivalry and misunderstanding between them, and this resulted in the death of all three wrought mutually. But since there was no question regarding their unflinching devotion to Shiva, they duly attained salvation and were united with the Lord.

Another bhakta of the Lord, the huntsman Thinna, plucked out his own eyes and offered them to the idol on the illusory notion that the Lord's eyes were bleeding! Thinna is hence known as Kannappa Nayanar, beloved of the Lord.

From these highlights in the Kalahasti Sthala Purana, we are to infer, firstly, that the Lord God is Lord as much of insect, reptile, animal and illiterate hunter, as of the learned, the high-born and the sophisticated; and, secondly, that jealousy and recrimination as between devotees of the Lord on the score of doctrine, ritualistic minutiae or the outer form of the Diety are utterly meaningless, and could prove mutually destructive. The Lord is the Lord of all, and He could be worshipped in many a form, in almost any form, and He would readily accept any offerings whatsoever if they were made to Him in all true sincerity of devotion.

Before Dhurjati indited his celebrated Sataka, he had for long basked in the sunshine of Krishna Devaraya's royal patronage, and he had also had his fill of sensual pleasures and worldly success. But these inevitably palled in the end, and drove him to Kalahasti to seek an end to the bondage of the lust for power, pelf and women. Thus a recurrent theme in the poem is the futility of royal favour, of worldly success, and of the lure of women. Enough of it all! Dhurjati would now find solace only at the feet of the Lord.

Another insight in the poem is the perception of the comparative futility of mere learning, of mastery of Veda, Sastra and Tantra, of loud profession and arduous practice, for winning salvation. It is the heart's love and the soul's surrender that alone can ensure the descent of Grace from Above, and not mastery of scripture or ritual. One has indeed to go beyond the seven oceans of mere knowledge and all the hills of ritualistic striving to attain the feet of the Lord in absolute devotion and utter self-surrender.

The translation of a poem like 'Sri Kalahastiswara Sataka' which is replete with imagery, allusion and spirals of suggestion can be no easy task. There is already, to my knowledge, the competent English prose translation by Sri P. Krishna Moorthy (1973), which is credited with "bringing out the entire spirit of the original into English." But Sri Bulusu Venkata Subbarao's present attempt is a rhymed metrical version—each stanza of the original being turned into a quartrain of 14 syllables in each line, with alternate rhymes—and is equipped with valuable notes elucidating the several allusions in the poem. The question is not whether one who can read the Sataka in the original will be satisfied with the translation. Naturally enough, he will prefer the cadenced Telugu original. The question rather is whether or not Sri Subbarao's metrical English version opens new horizons to the non-Telugu readers. I think Sri Subbarao has faced a difficult task with patience and proficiency, and I hope his commendable effort will reach a wide audience.

'Matri Bhavan'
91, Kutchery Road
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22-5-1975

K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar

To

SRIKALAHASTISWARA

INTRODUCTION

A Satakam is a composition of a hundred or more often a hundred and sixteen verses addressed to the author himself or to God. The Sataka literature is very popular in Andhra and there are about a thousand Satakams in Telugu. A Satakam may be philosophical, ethical, religious, political, social or amorous in its main theme. Among the important Satakams, Dhurjati's 'Srikalahastiswara Satakam' is easily one of the best by any standard.

Dhurjati addressed his verses to Lord Siva, who came to be known as Srikalahastiswara. Sri means spider. Kala means serpent and Hasti means elephant. Srikalahastiswara is thus the Lord of the spider, the serpent and the elephant. God in the form of Siva blessed an insect, a reptile and an animal and came to be known as Srikalahastiswara, thus making it clear that God is not for humans only. His love does not find any difference between the smallest and the greatest among his Creation. Was it not assured that God tempers the west wind for the shorn lamb ? Why ; He gives salvation too. The legend behind this theme centres round the idol of Lord Siva at a place in Andhra Pradesh called Srikalahasti. The Siva's image (in the shape of Linga) was worshipped by a spider, a cobra and a wild elephant. Soon there followed a keen rivalry among the three. The spider and the cobra conspired to get rid of the elephant by entering its brain through its trunk. They succeeded but they also lost their lives as the elephant unable to bear the terrible pain in the head dashed it against a hillock in the presence of the idol of his Lord. Forgiving their childish rivalry the Lord blessed them with salvation. Much later an illiterate tribal, Thinna, worships the same Sivalinga and one day finds to his grief that one of the eyes of Siva is bleeding. Without any hesitation he plucks out his own eye with his arrow to replace the bleeding eye. He was also rewarded with salvation. The magnificent temple of Siva on a hill in the jungles by the holy banks of the smiling and sparkling Suvarnamukhi river at Srikalahasti in Andhra Pradesh is still one of the greatest Siva temples in India.

It is to this Lord that Dhurjati dedicated his poetry and addressed his verses. Dhurjati was one of the eight great court poets of the famous Vijayanagara Emperor (1509-29 A.D.), Sri Krishna Deva Raya. Dhurjati left the

royal court in disgust, realising the futility of vain comforts and the foolishness of wasting life in their pursuit. He then dedicated his life to Srikalahastiswara. It was in this connection that this priceless addition to the Telugu Sataka literature emerged. The value of this volume is supreme as the author expressed his philosophy after experiencing the most covetted pleasures in the court of one of the great Hindu monarchs in one of the richest periods of our economic history (according to the foreign visitors* diamonds were sold on the wayside in the capital city of Vijayanagaram) and then the glorious joys of God realization.

In this translation in my own humble way I tried to place before the reader the great poetic personality of Dhurjati. And it is no easy task. I consider my ambition fulfilled if the reader could guess the greatness of the author's personality after perusing the translation. If he could not, the deficiency is entirely mine. The whole attempt is a crude sketch by an amateur artist and not a fine portrait by an expert photographer. I am greatly indebted to Prof. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar for his Foreword and excellent encouragement throughout.

Calcutta, 1975. Bulusu Venkata Subbarao

* (i) Nicolo Conti from Venice
(ii) Abdur Razak from Persia
(iii) Domingos Paes from Portugal
(iv) Durate Barbosa from Portugal
(v) Friar Luis from Portugal

THE VOICE OF DHURJATI

As the great lightning cloud of lust and passion
burst down in
Torrential sin I lost the balance of my lotus-mind
Lord ! Let for a while your kindly autumnal
time set in
That in peace I may serve You, leaving all
my cares behind
Oh ! Lord of Srikalahasti !* 1

* * * *

Is it for my treacherous plot at Your very door-way
Above Brahma's[1] reach to capture her-Salvation's
splendour
You pushed me down to the door-ways of petty
Kings today
And thus kept me banished from all the
eternal joys there... 2

* This must be repeated at the end of every verse as is the tradition in Satakas. It is omitted in the translation.

1 God in the role of Creator.

'All this is fiction!' man thus knowing too with
conviction
Throughout trusts his riches, relations, life all
to be true
And alas! in a strange spell of passions rolls
on and on
Not a bit thinking about the supreme truth
that is You... 3

* * * *

Listen! Let us have a pact: Claiming not a pie
As my wage, I serve you with cheer at heart
and you
Shelter me from my enemies six[2] which in my
Own mind reside; and nothing else I seek
from you... 4

* * * *

When I slipped and fell in the sea of hell, you
helped me not
Perhaps noting, 'Intoxicated in life's play he
sinned and well
He ignored me:' True; but will a loving father
rush not
When his dear son, playing, slips and falls into
a deep well?... 5

[2] These six are Kama (desire), Krodha (anger), Lobha (miserliness), Moha (passion), Mada (pride) and Matsarya (envy).

Oh! did I betray you to serve a master different?
Did I not trust You and You alone and obey
strictly?
For what sins then You impose this most cruel
punishment,
Plunging me in the midst of this dark
sea of misery... 6

* * * *

The mountain of gold[3] enriched by the fabulous
diamond[4]
The splendid cow[5] and the celestical tree[6] all,
are your property
The richest deity[7] is Your dear friend and Laxmi's
husband[8]
Is Your devotee. If You care not who cures
poverty!... 7

* * * *

My faith is confounded and shaken that I am
too small
To win Your heart by poetic skill[9] or by
sheer valour[10]
By supreme sacrifice or by extreme devotion[11]; all
That is mine is depressing: Can I reach You ever!... 8

3 Mt. Meru in Himalayas.

4 The precious stone which fulfils all desires.

5 Kamadhenu, the divine cow which likewise fulfils all wishes.

6 Kalpataru, the divine tree which also does so.

7 Kubera, the Lord of Riches.

8 God in the form of the preserver of life, the consort of Laxmi, the Goddess of Wealth.

9 Bana, a devotee who won the Lord's admiration by his heroism.

10 Pushpadanta, another devotee who realised God through his remarkable poetry.

11 sacrifice ... devotion: Other devotees who by their faith and courage won the appreciation of Siva.

Why did You tie round my neck these heavy
bondages all
Of wife children parents friends and wealth !
with this ruined mind
Down in the sea of lust when can I think of
You at all !
Fast I am sinking Lord ! to save me a way
You must find... 9

* * * *

Your name destroys as a raging flame the huge
cotton hills
Of sins of those who hear it from a distance even by
Accident, demolishes Yama's[12] pride and their lives
it fulfils
Thus assured great scholars and sacred books :
Still they doubt ; why !... 10

* * * *

When honoured as the Chief Guest, when
hearing flattery when
Belly is full and when glories of wealth
overwhelm, when
Musicians sing in praise, in paradise of
fools these men
Waste their lives. Of them it is not worthy
to talk even... 11

12 The God of Death.

Let troubles worry me or merry events surround ;
Let me be called a fool or be adored as a soul great ;
Let life's illusions trap or wisdom dawn all around ;
Let stars frown or Luck smile ; I care not
when I serve Your feet... 12

* * * *

What sacred scriptures that spider[13] read :
That serpent,[13a] what great
Sciences it mastered ? What knowledge that
elephant[13b] did own ?
And what spells that tribal[13c] commanded ?
It is not reading that
Matters, the true urge to serve You,
wisdom is that alone... 13

* * * *

This body became sore with the love-play
of ladies' long
Nails, this chest became hard as stone by the
constant friction
With their full breasts ; in the hunt for the
delights of sex, long
Back Youth left me old and bald : Lord !
crush this crazy passion... 14

[13] to [13c] spider; serpent; elephant; tribal: See introduction.

How can I pray You without knowing
Your identity ?
Goat's dung ?[14] lady's breast ?[14a] knee[14b]
measure ?[14c] What is Your shape truly ?
Lord ! hear my prayers and wipe out my
doubts and stupidity
By blessing my eyes with Your physical form
truthfully... 15

* * * *

I did not order You to be my door-keeper,[15] never
Insulted You with an impure meal,[16] nor did
I throw You
Out of my place[17] blinded by sex-mania : My prayer
You left unheard, tell me why : It's not Your
custom I knew... 16

[14 to 14c] Goat's dung ; lady's breast ; knee ; measure ; All these resemble the symbol of God in the form of Siva. A shepherd boy unable to find a suitable image prays to Siva before the Goat's excreta visualising it as His symbol and realizes Him by sheer devotion. Two devotees of Siva set out to a temple. But one of them was tempted to go to his keep's abode. Sensing her man's conflicting emotions, the keep urges him to pray Siva visualising His form in her breast. The great devotee did so and was blessed by God. In Andhra Pradesh the Lord so appeared is worshipped as Aachanteswara in a village called Achanta. Similarly, two other devotees attained salvation by praying to Siva by taking the knee and measure as symbols of Siva. All these legends had temples depicting the details.

[15] great devotee, Bana, having won the intimacy of God, asked Him to be his palace guard which He obliged.

[16] Another devotee Thinna an illiterate tribal offers half eaten food to satisfy the 'hungry' God.

[17] Another devotee insults Siva asking Him to get out of his sight. The Lord bears whatever His devotees do, with fatherly indulgence once they convince Him of the sincerity of their devotion.

These, my hands, lack the nerve to stone You,[18]
it is beyond me
To sacrifice my son with joy,[19] I shudder to
pluck my
Eyes for you,[20] what do I deserve ! Whatever
you grant me
I take it as the greatest boon with all my
spirits high... 17

* * * *

Kings are petty and foolish ; their service
is hellish and
Their gifts all-beauties, chariots, gems and
jobs are at best,
Seeds of mental torture ; enough of them
I had : I stand
Here waiting, Lord ! Show me the path that
leads to You fastest... 18

* * * *

The beginning and the end of Your form I
could not trace
And You Yourself offer not to enlighten ;
let me
Not waste my time after vain trails : I leave it
all to Your grace,
Whether You give me sweet milk or plunge
me in a deep sea... 19

18 stone You: A devotee stones Him but thinking he is doing Him good and for his conviction gets His blessings.

19 sacrifice my son with joy: When God tests him with a request to offer him food prepared with his son's flesh, a great devotee called Chirutonda Nambi does so and wins Siva's admiration for his supreme sacrifice.

20 pluck my Eyes for You: To test an ignorant devotee Thinna, Siva pretends as if His eye was hurt. The devotee at once gives his own eye and pleases the God.

I wonder why You should run to eat the
half-eaten meat
With greed from that tribal,[21] having the
deer, the fire, the spear
And the water too, You could have prepared
it neat
If you long for it : Oh ! No ! Mere meat could
not be that dear !... 20

* * * *

Now or in the lives to come, I cannot bear
the word 'King'
Moon the king of stars is a victim of consumption,
Ever in misery lives Kubera[22] the King's King
Of the same title the Kuru King[23] too, in war,
faced destruction... 21

* * * *

When 'His Majesty' himself runs after riches;
where
Shall justice be, how shall duty be done, where
is shelter
For the good, who will protect ladies' honour
and where
Can Your devotees offer their prayers in
peace ever... 22

21 Thinna who offered impure meal, as already explained.

22 Kubera is known as king of all kings for his riches.

23 The king of Kauravas also known similarly dies helplessly in a battle-field.

Glow-worms' glows, lightnings' lights, glitters
of broken glass,
Thinning edges of elephants' ears, peepal
leaves, writings
In the space, bubbles, mere mirages are these
lives alas!
Riches are layers of moon shine: Trapped men
are with such things!... 23

* * * *

I trust You as none else I do: Other than You I have
Parents, brothers, relatives, friends or teachers
none at all
My Lord! from this sea of misery when
do You save
And bless me kindly with an ocean of joy eternal... 24

* * * *

In Your presence the alms in my begging
bowl I enjoy
As royal meal; away, I opt not for the
treasures all
Of royal service. In endless circles of earthy joy
Let me not roam, if You want me as Your
worthy vassal... 25

All according to the rites; I took Your name
and the pure water
That washed Your feet, shared Your plate, Your
food and betal leaves too
And myself I adopted as Your dear child,
hereafter
Never leave me, Father, I left them all to
be with you... 26

* * * *

Lord! You are my mother and father both, whom
else but You
Shall I call so; mind not parents here, here or
there to me
You alone are loving mother, father and
mentor true,
Bounden thus You are to protect when darkness
surrounds me... 27

* * * *

In this life's illusion fools cry that they have
sons none: The
Proud King of Kurus[24] had a hundred sons,
where did they all
Land him? In what hells childless Sri Suka[25]
was forced to be?
Heavens cannot be closed to those who had
no sons at all!... 28

[24] Dhritarashtra, whose sons all mighty but wicked brought disgrace and destruction to his Kingdom.

[25] A great saint who never married.

Can bad stars and evil omens harm those
good people
Who always keep Your sacred name on their lips:
can a swarm
Of locusts smother a wild fire, How absurd!
Do people
I wonder, wish to serve You to end all evil
and harm... 29

* * * *

Out of lust for life hereafter never in any way
Will I desire for anything; if at all I do, I may,
For the company of Your devotees:
Having had You to pray
What else deserves desire and what else is there
still to pray... 30

* * * *

Majestic elephants, gleaming chariots, most stunning
Palanquins, prize horses, scents, rare dresses
priceless gems all
Can they give salvation?; ignorant people
go running
After them and at the royal gates they waste
their days all... 31

This mischievous mind ! it abhors and abhors
not the gleams
Of sex, severs and severs not the bonds of kinship
Snaps and snaps not the entangling creepers
of endless dreams
Come ! Crush its pride, even You it does and
does not worship... **32**

* * * *

Oh ! how many years I spent here and what
I achieved ; to
Whom and with what aim I still live ;
Truth will I ever see ;
In the days still left what can I do except
to serve You
Belittle me not Lord ! Come, save me,
I am at Your mercy... **33**

* * * *

Even the monk who renounced all, clings on,
though well knowing,
His end nearing, to the hope looking for the
doctor who
Can cure him, for the drug which can save
him and for the loving
Angels who may pity him, entirely forgetting You... 34

Realizing You in peaceful meditation in the
Lotus-pose in the lovely woods day after day
On the banks of 'Suvarnamukhi,'[26] is true joy;
Can the
Magic spells of the notch girl called Wealth
be joy any way!... 35

* * * *

Why should You make this relationship called
love, with wife and
Children and extend it by many wedlocks later on;
All like an endless chain of steel links fitted
tightly and
Bind some and make them wander in circles of
blind passion... 36

* * * *

Make this body permanent, if
it should not be, make me
Not to take birth again; to do
either if You have skill
None, atleast tell me so atonce, so
that all that can be
Done to realize You I will do
in the time I have still... 37

[26] The name of the river whereby the town of Srikalahasti is situated.

That a grand emperor had once
ruled over this world all
At a stretch for fourteen mahayugas
and another
Such held sway over the earth from
pole to pole, now these small
Creatures never heard ; how they
all die of kingship ever !... 38

*　*　*　*

Love, grace of learning, truthfulness, justice,
friendship, caring
For scholars, dutifulness, gratitude, noble traits all
Will they vanish at the mere utterance of the
word 'King' !
Is that why in these Kings we see the worst
of humans all !... 39

*　*　*　*

Myself as I compare to those great souls in the
past crowned
By You on the thrones of divine domains,
my lowness only
I see, I could not see You as, in faith,
I wouldn't be found
Equal to Your spider,[27] cobra,[27a] elephant[27b]
or tribal[27c] truly... 40

Ornaments of bone, garments of elephant's
skin and free
Life in wilds are dear to You. It is no wonder then
You favoured that snake,[27d] that tusker[27e] and
that hunter[27f] all three
But God ! What is the fun in lifting that
spider to heaven !... 41

* * * *

Making love to heavenly beauties satisfies not
Sex ; attaining Godhood fails to contain greed,
devouring
The worlds all subdues not the raging wrath :
I prefer not
These life's joys ; better I cross this muddle
with Your blessing... 42

* * * *

The true meaning of the ritual dip the
bereaved take on
That day is clear ; they pledge 'Oh Yama !
Doubt us not, soon
We too follow sure !' but fools understand not
and go on
Till they too die, living in the paradise of their
own... 43

27d to 27f snake ; tusker ; hunter : See introduction.

Can prayers to the royal insects end all human ills
As can only the service to Your feet ! Can the
false "breasts"
Hanging down the goats' neck satisfy the infant's
vials
Of hunger as can the most affectionate mother's
breasts !... 44

* * * *

The dreadful 'Vajrayudha'[28] turns out to be a flower
Beautiful ; fire becomes ice ; deep sea, firm ground ;
foe mortal,
Dear friend ; strong poison, food of Gods ; for
him who with cheer
Chants Your name Siva ! which makes everything
possible... 45

* * * *

Why do people go to serve the kings I wonder ;
are not
There in the woods-fruits, river waters pure,
most secure cave
Shelters and fine fabrics for clothes too, why !
are You not
There in their own selves ever ready to protect
and save... 46

28 The weapon of Indra the Lord of heaven.

I know not how many lives I lived in the
past and I dare
Not count the mounts of sin I then made :
Fool that I am, now
To reckon that this is my one and only life,
Lord : spare
Me for my little prayers from these births
and deaths with love... 47

* * * *

How long this body lasts in this world, so
long with kindness
Free me from disease, poverty and distress
And at the end enable me ; to serve You with
calmness ;
Detached from the universe and all in bliss... 48

* * * *

As if the nasty haunt of Cupid is the doorway
to penance,
That hairy curve[29] is 'Kundalini'[30] the limbs
and the eyes are
The six 'Padmas'[30a] the face is the moon and
love-making hence
Is true Yoga, these men adore women, fools
as they are... 49

[29] That hairy curve: The curve of hair down the navel.

[30] to [30a] Kundalini; Padmas: Yogic terms. Padma is lotus. Kundalini is the ultimate power symbolised as a snake, which will be aroused by Yogic practice and makes man supremely powerful aiding God realisation.

My joy excelling with devotion,
I worship You while
Using with mirth nine 'rasas'
for holy waters, lovely
Verses for flowers, sounds of
words for music charms of style
For lights and sweet poetry for
offering most heartily... 50

* * * *

Far beyond the reach of all tricks of poetry
is Your most
Magnificent form ; when it comes to portraying
Truth where
Does poetry stand and how helplessly it fails
and is lost,
We poets ought to bow down our heads in
the shame we all share... 51

* * * *

When the dear child refuses to touch its meal
of rice and
Sweet milk until the plantain fruit too is
brought then and there
The glory of love the proud parents show
meeting its demand
That glory I crave of You : For nothing else
do I care... 52

I know ; to make us believe that life is not transient
And unreal, You made a big show of this
little bubble,
Loading it with dreams, omens, devils, ghosts,
unknown ailment,
Evil-eye, bad stars and all such superstitious
rubble... 53

* * * *

The man who wears the flower offered to You
on his crown,
The sacred ash on his forehead, the 'Ridraksha'[31]
garland
Round his neck the holy Chandan[32] on his
nose and lives on
Your 'prasad' stays in bliss forever as Your
dearest friend... 54

* * * *

What a great relief You derive as these ignorant men
Leave You and serve their wives, children,
kinsmen and friends always
Knowing not that they cannot fulfil their desires :
But then
Dear Lord ! For whom do You preserve all
this wealth of Your grace... 55

[31] Garland of sacred beeds worn to count the number of times Lord's name is uttered.

[32] Sandal wood paste.

Gladly accepting whatever You are pleased to
grant me ;
As the silver hill,[33] the milk-foam-bed[34] and the
lotus-throne[35]
I remain at Your feet as Your loyal servant. As the
Mean wicked Kings trouble me, I serve You
and You alone... 56

* * * *

A hill of ice,[36] a great bull,[36a] ashes[36b] plenty,
a human
Skull, a necklace of snakes,[36c] jewels of bone[36d]
and tiger's skin[36e]
Your wealth is indeed splendid ! and then You
are only one
With none else to claim share as You have no
kith and kin... 57

* * * *

'By studying scriptures, by meditation deep
and by grand
Research of systems great, we found Truth
"this body as such
Dies, God alone is true ;" Thus the foolish
scholars shout and
Waste their breath ; they know not the lasting
joys beyond mind's reach... 58

[33] The abode of Siva (Himalayas).

[34] The symbolic bed of Vishnu.

[35] The seat of Brahma. In other words, Godhood in all its three-forms of creation, preservation and destruction.

[36] to [36e] ice ; bull ; ashes ; skull ; snakes ; jewels of bone ; tiger's skin : The things associated with Siva.

Those who trusted You truly, will they decline
and decay
In their struggle for food ! Why then the
scriptures all assured
'Aayurannam Prayachchati.'[37] Those who decline
and decay
Are they that crave for the vain pleasures
leaving Truth obscured... 59

* * * *

I am here stunned by fear and grief like the
helpless calf caught
Between two ferocious bulls fighting to death,
provoked by sexual
Rivalry and blinded by brutal ignorance :
Delay not,
Come fast Lord ! before I am crushed and
can no longer call... 60

* * * *

Doubtful and depressing are the manner and
the matter
Of this life, fearful and puzzling are the ways
of this body,
Sorrowful and disappointing is time's
passage ever
Strange ! none wants to get out of it all, to
reach You timely... 61

[37] Life provides sustenance.

At the gateways of Cupid joys I had had
enough, at
The gateways of Kings joys I had had enough
to my heart's
Contempt: To my heart's content grant me now
the great joys at
The gateways of Your grand Kingdom where
joy never departs... 62

* * * *

At once declaring in public 'We barter
not our
Poetry for regal honours,' they crave the
meanest king
For his small mercy to keep their families
happier
In vain comforts: Their nasty tales merit no
mentioning... 63

* * * *

Only he who merges will in concentration using
The yogic aids as the dot and the flame, with
'OM' the sound
Divine and steadies his deer-like mind in the
obstructing
Jungles to the true joy can snap the worldly ties
all round... 64

To fulfil a desire I think not of praying
You. 'Why
Then all these poems praising me,' You will
frown, but believe me
To my tongue poetry is a natural property,
To reach You burdened with desires, I know,
is beyond me... 65

* * * *

Trusting the red poppy flowers to be honeyed
fruits, pretty
Parrots approach them only to suffer : Vain-glorious
Scholars enter the ritualistic muddles made by
Religions to suffer Your separation grevious... 66

* * * *

How foolish these mortals can be, they even kill
others to
Usurp higher states : Will they not leave this
world one day ? Are
Their near and dear whom they keep in vain
comfort deathless ? Do
Their riches stay with them forever ? : Why
they never care !... 67

The man blessed with Your grace visits not
dark chambers of sin
Speaks not hurtful words, keeps not company
with evil minds
Abhors pretensions, avoids blind religions and in
Life's bad turns loses not his balance and full
truth he finds... 68

* * * *

Relatives are traitors all ; their acts of envy are
Hard to bear ; to retaliate is unbecoming ; to
Forget it all if I go as a monk, peace becomes rare
Till I retort, Lord ! save me now I know not
what to do... 69

* * * *

Having read a few books the low-minded scholars
loudly
Prattle as they please only when they live
in total peace ;
But soon in the dense jungles of doubts
they are lost tamely,
As Rage Passion and Vanity attack them in full
force... 70

Poor man, with a sick mind ; what shackles can
he break and how,
What gains can he claim, himself being gained
by ego,
To the evil ways what doors can he close,
himself enclosed now
In darkness and what deeds can he boast of,
living so low... 71

* * * *

I never cared to go on pilgrimage to Your holy
Temples any ; glorious 'Kasi,' sacred
'Kanchi' and
Great 'Sri Saila' all I ignored ; to save me
the only
Way is to view my small merits as golden
mountains grand... 72

* * * *

Can sit as a high priest and allow his
followers
To sprinkle the water that washed his feet on
their heads ; how
Charming are the uses of learning ! can claim
his servers'
Wealth, time and lives too, but not You for, wealth
in his first love... 73

Did they crush to dust the baffling
manifestations of
Your mighty illusion or finish Death; Did
they humble
The invincible Cupid or end mammon's cunning
ways, of
What help can they be when they themselves
are so feeble... 74

* * * *

To taste, see, hear, embrace and enjoy
in many a way
You designed living beings, yet why again
You branded
The same acts of sensual pleasures as sins?
By such play
Is it proper to amuse Yourself leaving us stranded... 75

* * * *

All my evil deeds when I recall, for myself I feel
Contempt; when I watch Death striking everyday,
I dread;
When I review my past and the duties ignored,
I feel
Frightened of myself; with time, darkness
all round me spread... 76

I tarvelled along the routes of ancient knowledge,
Followed the secret paths of Yogic systems and
by heart
Got all scriptures but doubts leave me not in
the least, I urge
You, make me believe and teach me how to reach
Your resort... 77

* * * *

With their petty minds they now wish to
demolish the great
Commandments pronounced by the wisemen of
the past, minding
Not, what sins their followers commit; to what
wretched state
They pull down the laymen and all this how
He is watching !... 78

* * * *

A copper's worth of joy or the power of retaining
A small atom after final departure, total
Absolvation from sin or fulfilment as desires spring,
Or fame, or You; what can this lust give ?
Why not You end it all... 79

This body becomes weak and shaky if it
takes just one
Morsel less, rushes for shade if the
Sun is a bit harsh,
Hugs the fire at the slightest chill,
at a drizzle it will run
Into the nearest house : Fools still fall for
the joys of this trash... 80

* * * *

When and where one gets the chance to pray You,
then and there is
'Kasi,' in one's frontyard and 'Kailasa' on the
threshold
Why then people rush to 'Kedara' and like places ;
It is
That, filled with vain desires, their weak minds,
Truth, cannot behold... 81

* * * *

Catch this mischievous theif of mind who always
plans to
Seize others' women, and wealth, tie him up tight
With chains of 'vairagya'[38] to the pillar of Your leg to
Punish him that he may never waver
from the paths right... 82

[38] detachment.

Not that want to find fault with the
Creator but why
Should He make gentle scholars, He did
to show His skill, true,
Then why should He subject them to hunger,
to abide by
Nature's law may be, can't He stop there,
why make these mean kings too... 83

* * * *

Just for serving You with a 'bilva' leaf
in true faith, pleased
You will reward with salvation, but simple,
folks knowing
You not, go with cartloads of offerings all
to be placed
At the feet of all and sundry; thus in both
ways losing... 84

* * * *

Evil plots and sinful deeds are fruits and
flowers indeed
Filthy acts and ugly lies are tendrils and
leaves to the
Tree of mind rooted in earthy knowledge;
it will need,
For flourishing well, the flow of craze for
pleasures worldly... 85

The man who writes poems on You, the man
who begs the poets to
Write poems on You for his dedicated prayers
and the man
Who revels in such poetry are my relations true!
Others are related but by bloody bondage, human... 86

* * * *

Chasing away the pride of wealth, subduing
the foes internal,
Crushing vain desires, piercing evil thoughts,
snapping the whole
Human bondage, abridging youth's play and
slapping senses all
Man can realize You thus reaching his life's
final goal... 87

* * * *

Like slaves to approach the kings for material
pleasures, or
In peace to serve You, who brings fulfilment to
the life here
Oh! What is true joy? the ignorant men
neither know nor
Wish to know, their weak minds surrendered
to the false joys here... 88

They saw people dying yesterday and day
before, death
Is not strange to them ; it is too familiar to
frighten
Them to a halt in their march in search of
vicious wealth,
If You stop them not now they may no longer
pray You even... 89

*   *   *   *

Your dress is elephant's skin, Your food is
the most fatal
'Kalakuta,' Your cup is a skull-cap and Your garland
Is a King cobra. How wonderful is Your natural
State, knowing all how strange, 'Vishnu' became
Your devotee grand... 90

*   *   *   *

Gate after gate guards force them to stop,
cursing and swearing
Using their spears ; they bear it all and pray them
with words sweet
To be allowed to serve the king : Only Your
men being
Different, all the wealth fails to lure
away from Your feet... 91

Will not householders provide alms in towns,
will not caves give
Shelter, are clothes so scarce, is there not
soothing cool water
Abundantly available in streams, do not
You love
Your devotees why then these men serve
the Kings I wonder... 92

* * * *

The quantity of flour and not of hunger
decides the
Bread's size, so does the intensity of devotion, the
Size of boon: Our prayers and Your grace are
likewise linked, the
Cynics cry though 'Praying Him is no good;
unkind is He.'... 93

* * * *

In 'Atma's'[39] infinite space a sound was born
pleasantly
To be known as 'Om' the eternal sound of
divine hue
A compound of 'aa,' 'oo,' and 'ma' and universally
spread, and showered music-drops of celestial joy:
That is You... 94

[39] The indestructable soul.

You keep silent as Your devotees pray You
in ways ten
Thousand ; why have You become so miserly,
salvation
And all their wishes if You grant them
gracefully, listen !
Your grand treasury will not suffer any depletion... 95

* * * *

In the Good olden days You were so generous
that when
Any devotee approached You his prayers were
granted
At once ; "With age miserliness too grows"
became even
With You true ; now You hear no prayers
whoever chanted... 96

* * * *

An unbreakable bolt that shuts the doors
and keeps out Death,
A mighty kite to the serpent-tongue of
'Chitragupta'[40]
And 'Vajrayudha' to the cruel fangs of hungry Death
Is Your great name Siva ! my Lord !
'Dikchelalankrita.'[41]... 97

[40] The angel employed by God Yama to keep account of the good and bad deeds of all living beings.

[41] Having the corners of universe as Your robes.

I wish not to taste the favours of patrons
ten thousand
All wicked and mean-minded ; give me one noble
prince who
Is truthful, benevolent and loving :
As Your own grand
Deputy I take him, leaving my life and gift to You... 98

* * * *

Death ! do they not see it snatching away
their own fathers
Mothers, grand parents and elders all ; to them
death became so
Much known that they dread it not even seeing
their brothers
Wives, children and friends die : You,
they may never care to know... 99

* * * *

Electing slavery, committing cruel acts, giving
False evidence, spreading evil rumours and carrying
Tales, of nothing stops short, this tiny human being,
Only to acquire wealth as if it is everlasting... 100

Blinded by the charms of some evil counsel,
true, many
Sins I committed but to punish, if You are
planning
To neck me out of Your place, You gain not
success any :
Where can I go, I stay here, the beams of Your
house clutching... 101

* * * *

Their bodies smeared with sacred ashes, their
hairs left loose and
Dusty, their minds addicted to penance,
their lives ever
Cheerful with 'Panchakshari'[42] their jewels
being truth and
'Rudraksha' Your men how-so-ever they
are I revere... 102

* * * *

How can a muddy well hold flowing water
as a stream
Sparkling does ? How can a saintly group
stay in a drunkard's den ?
Your supreme grace and not my meanness
extreme
Must You consider when You reward my
small prayers then... 103

[42] The mantra 'Om Namassivayah.'

In hours two or three or just in a single one, today
Or tomorrow after an Year, sooner or later,
Sometime, these bodies fall dead on earth in
someway
But none goes the right way to take
refuge in You ever... 104

* * * *

Is it a great wonder to get horses, elephants and
Gleaming chariots, is it impossible to have
wives charming
And sons worthy, priceless gems, rare dresses
and thousand
Other things if one serves Your lotus-feet
Your name chanting ?... 105

* * * *

His life fulfilled, man excels and reaches You
to share with You
The cool waters of holy Ganga and lovely moon all
In return for a dedicated prayer, a flower You
Love, and a little water, Lord ! Your grace
is eternal... 106

How to forgive these fools who before
mirrors admiring
The 'spark' in their own eyes waste hours !
And spend their lives too
Singing in praise of Women's eyes, in rapturous
songs as the lightning
Curves, 'lotusses,' 'pure beauties' and signs of
cupid's triumph true... 107

* * * *

Fools comprehend not the pleasures of
salvation truly,
Mockingly they liken them to the rope-serpent,
paper-garment
Silvery shell ; and the moon-stones' reflected
red glory
Brave only in words, they all run at the slightest
movement... 108

* * * *

Did not You humble the proud 'Daksha'[43]
who dared to defy
You, Did not You punish the great 'Brahma'
even, why are You
Now indifferent, when Your own men are
insulted by
Some ruffians : Are Your devotees different
from You ?... 109

[43] Daksha, the father of 'Sati,' who insults his son-in-law Siva by not inviting Him for a ritual celebration. He rebukes Siva in the presence of all other invitees and unable to bear the insult 'Sati' commits suicide. The Lord punishes Daksha for his arrogance.

Has the spear that pierced that giant-elephant[44]
slipped from Your hand ?
Has the fire of Your eye that charred
the Cupid[45] frozen now
Why then You tolerate them all who insult
Your grand
Devotees, what secret favours they did to
You and how ?... 110

* * * *

Waging a war, holding a fort, serving a king, going
As his emissary, practising as a quack doctor,
Shipping or stealing, all if successful,
vast fortune bring
Else they destroy one's wealth, fame, or even
life and honour... 111

* * * *

Even the man who lives assisting the distressed,
serving
The saints, following ethics strict, growing
gardens, digging
Fresh water tanks having worthy sons and
'asrams' building
Cannot hope for the bliss Your men
gain only by praying... 112

44 The gigantic elephant 'Airavata' who carries Lord of Angels 'Indra' punished by God for misbehaviour.

45 Manmadha, the God of Love attempts to provoke sexual urge in Lord Siva so that he will love and marry Parvathi, the energy in the shape of Goddess. Siva marries Parvathi but not before destroying the Love God by the flames of his third eye. The marriage of God with Nature takes place after desire is crushed.

"Your Majesty ! a great poet awaits Your
pleasure. He writes
Poetry with ease ; grand in style and theme.
His art is pure,
His genius is rare and on cheap sex he never writes."
"Go ! we saw him already." So the mean kings
respond, sure... 113

* * * *

This my poetry, I pledged to You as people applaud
I took the vow never to sell away my talent to
Anyone else : And I am content now. The cause
my Lord !
Is not the talent but is its dedication to You... 114

* * * *

Praying You ever man can win the supreme
position
Of salvation : But for royal grace the
lower he stooped
The more is he disgraced alas ! as the foolish person
Who takes to use the oil, from the furious
flames, to be saved !... 115

Before teeth shake and fall, the might of
muscles is not lost,
Fair-sex avoids company in contempt, senility
Displaces youth, glossy black hair turns
white and symptoms
Strange show on the body man must pray
You with purity.
Oh! Lord of Srikalahasti! 116